



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

Contact: Kevin Kerstein  
Publicity Manager  
Churchill Downs Racetrack  
(610) 420-6971 (mobile)  
(502) 635-4712 (office)  
[Kevin.Kerstein@KyDerby.com](mailto:Kevin.Kerstein@KyDerby.com)

## **JUSTIFY BREEZES FIVE FURLONGS IN 1:01.40 FOR BELMONT STAKES; SCHEDULED TO DEPART BARN 33 FOR NEW YORK ON WEDNESDAY AT 8 A.M. ET**

**LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Monday, June 4, 2018)** – Under sunny skies and a comfortable 63 degrees, undefeated Kentucky Derby (Grade I) and Preakness Stakes (GI) winner **Justify** completed his serious preparations for Saturday's \$1.5 million Belmont Stakes (GI) with a five-furlong breeze over a "fast" Churchill Downs track in 1:01.40 with **Martin Garcia** in the saddle.

With a few hundred spectators on hand, **WinStar Farm, China Horse Club, Head of Plains Partners** and **Starlight Racing's** colt came onto the track at 7:30 a.m. (all times Eastern) during a special 10-minute training period for locally-based Belmont Stakes contenders. Justify broke away from the stable pony **Sunny** and trainer **Bob Baffert's** chief assistant **Jimmy Barnes** at the 4 ½-furlong pole and began his breeze at the half-mile marker through splits of :12.80, :24.80, :37 and :48.80 before galloping out six furlongs in 1:13.60 and seven-eighths of a mile in 1:27.20.

"It was a really nice breeze and exactly what we were looking for," Baffert said. "He relaxed nicely and seemed very happy. Martin was very happy with him as well so I was happy, too. He was a little fresh earlier in the week so it was good to see him relax nicely."

Immediately following Justify's work, stablemate and fellow Belmont Stakes contender, Wood Memorial (GII) third **Restoring Hope**, breezed six furlongs in 1:13 under jockey **Florent Geroux** (splits: :12.60, :24.40, :36.20, :48.40 and 1:00.20 with a gallop out of 1:26.40).

"Restoring Hope went really well," Baffert said. "He's always been a really good work horse. He's sort of a one-paced horse. He went a little faster than Justify but I thought overall the work was very good."

Justify and Restoring Hope are scheduled to make the two-hour flight to New York on Wednesday from Louisville and will leave Churchill Downs' Barn 33 between 8-8:30 a.m.

Only 12 horses have swept the Triple Crown: **Sir Barton** (1919), **Gallant Fox** (1930), **Omaha** (1935), **War Admiral** (1937), **Whirlaway** (1941), **Count Fleet** (1943), **Assault** (1946), **Citation** (1948), **Secretariat** (1973), **Seattle Slew** (1977), **Affirmed** (1978) and, most recently, the Baffert-trained **American Pharoah** (2015).

"I think the Triple Crown brings a lot more people into the game," Baffert said. "It also brings a lot of new owners. I saw a lot of new faces in the game after Pharoah won the Triple Crown. It's no walk in the park to win but it's very important to our sport when we have a Triple Crown possibility on the line."

Regular jockey **Mike Smith** is scheduled to ride Justify in the Belmont Stakes while Geroux has the call on Restoring Hope.

"Mike, just like any other rider, has to have the horse underneath him to succeed," Baffert said. "A good rider's job is to keep the horse out of trouble and make split-second decisions if he needs to. Really the biggest part of the race is breaking cleanly from the gate. With Pharoah, he broke about one length slower than the field. It could've been a bad situation but he got into a good position early. After the gate break, you just have to see how the race plays out."

In other local Belmont Stakes news, Preakness runner-up **Bravazo** left trainer **D. Wayne Lukas' Barn 44** early Monday morning via van to New York while Preakness third, **Tenfold**, jogged one mile following his five-furlong breeze in 1:01.60 Saturday at Churchill Downs. Breeders' Futurity winner **Free Drop Billy** walked trainer **Dale Romans' Barn 4** shedrow following his five-furlong move in :59.20 Sunday at Churchill Downs.

Tenfold is scheduled to fly to New York on Tuesday and leave Churchill Downs at approximately 10:30 a.m. while Free Drop Billy is scheduled to join Justify and Restoring Hope on Wednesday's flight.

The Belmont Stakes field could possibly be comprised of the following 11 horses (with trainer): **Blended Citizen** (Doug O'Neill), **Bravazo** (Lukas), **Free Drop Billy** (Romans), **Gronkowski** (Chad Brown), **Hofburg** (Bill Mott), **Justify** (Baffert), **Noble Indy** (Todd Pletcher), **Restoring Hope** (Baffert), **Seahenge** (Aidan O'Brien), **Tenfold** (Asmussen) and **Vino Rosso** (Pletcher).

To watch Justify and Restoring Hope's breeze Monday visit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1e2XMeabsNA>.

For complementary Belmont Stakes past performances courtesy of Brisnet.com, visit <http://www.brisnet.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/BelmontStakes18.pdf>.

**DOWN THE STRETCH** – Following dark days Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, racing at Churchill Downs resumes Thursday for an eight-race Twilight Thursday program that features a massive \$408,781 carryover in the 20-cent Single 6 Jackpot which begins in Race 3 at approximately 5:58 p.m. Twilight Thursday also features \$1 beer, local food trucks and live music from folk band **Bridge 19**. Gates open at 4 p.m. with the first post at 5 p.m. For more information and to purchase tickets, visit [www.churchilldowns.com](http://www.churchilldowns.com).

-END-